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ABSTRACT

Analysis of secondary data from 1980-85 revealed economic, demographic, social, and psychological effects of the current "farm crisis" on rural communities in Nebraska. Agriculturally dependent counties were found to have a widening income disparity with state and metropolitan county averages, declining retail sales, slower increase in number of establishments supplying goods and services, loss of population from rural counties, higher proportion of elderly residents, declining student enrollment, a lag behind the state as a whole in increase in ratio of physicians, more physicians over 50 years of age, and more part-time health services personnel than in metropolitan counties. Rural counties showed dramatic rate increases in public welfare program participation while metro rates increased only slightly during the period. Admissions to community mental health centers showed a small but consistent increase in agriculturally dependent counties with approximately half of the admissions for alcohol or minor mental problems relating to stress. Researchers concluded that basic economic indicators pointed to economic deterioration of rural communities, but recommended use of primary data reflecting views and behavior of community members to determine social and psychological changes. Appended tables provide economic, demographic, social, and psychological data grouped by counties. (LFL)

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

staff paper

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1986 - #3

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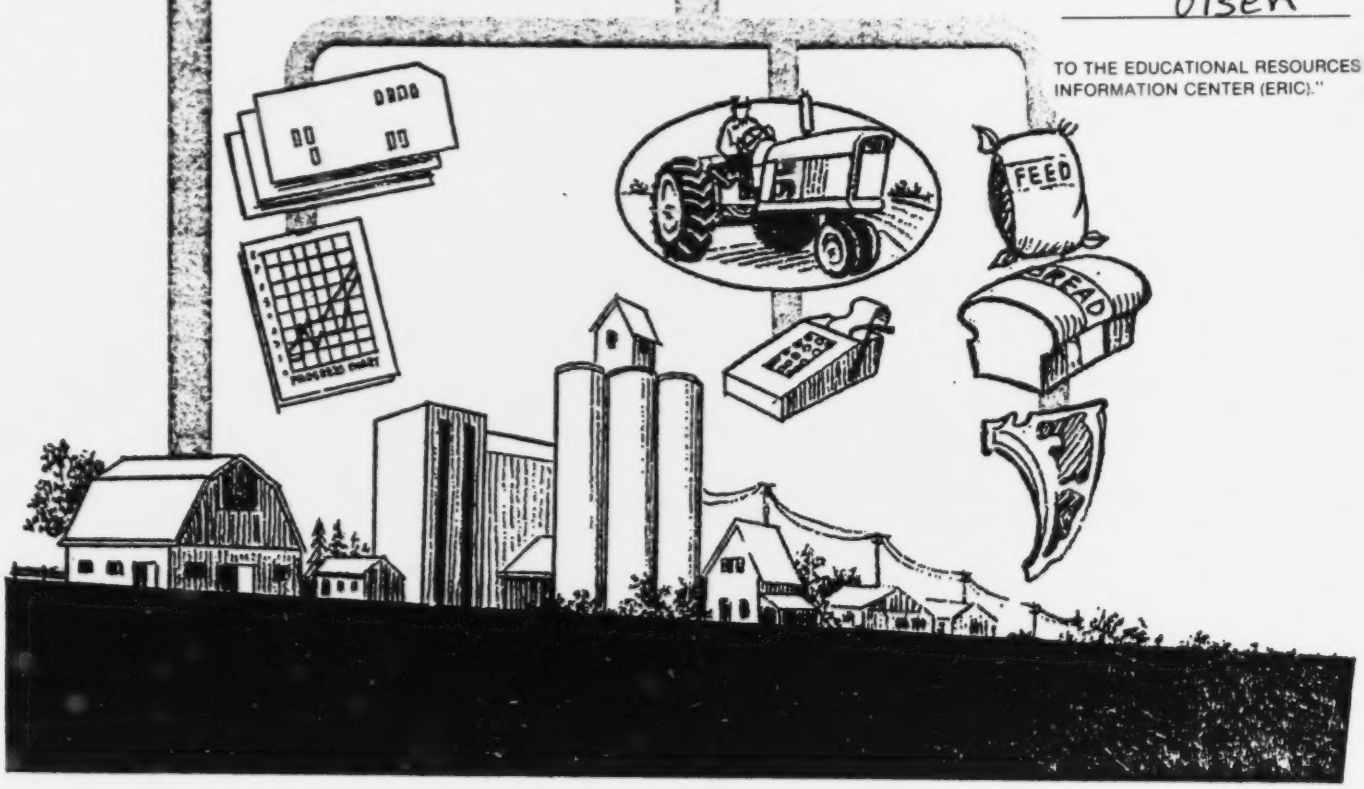

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Introduction

In the wake of an economic boom period during much of the 1970's, U.S. production agriculture has now experienced several successive years of income shortfalls, eroding wealth, and financial stress. For many producers, it has been and continues to be, indeed, a "farm crisis". Sheer economic survival during this current wave of economic hard times is a primary objective. Clearly, major structural change is under way within the farming sector [Schertz et al.; Frederick and Johnson].

But while primary focus has been on farm stress, agriculture's current conditions and trends have impacts and implications for rural communities that are no less profound. Several factors would indicate that the current crisis will have permanent and far reaching effects on the structural base of rural life styles. In recent months, Nebraska has acutely experienced the symptoms of the agricultural crisis, not only in terms of farm bankruptcies and foreclosures, but also bank closings, and other business decline. To cope with these immediate and longer term impacts, it is necessary for residents of rural communities to understand the nature of their changing environment and to develop individual and collective strategies for socioeconomic adjustment.

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*University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Research funds provided by the University Nebraska Foundation.

For Nebraska, the effects and implications of the agricultural crisis on rural farm and nonfarm residents are particularly pronounced. The State has more than 400 towns of less than 1,000 population. The State's size and the location of metropolitan centers leave most of these communities relatively isolated. Further, most towns depend heavily upon production agriculture as their economic base. In a national study which classified counties relative to economic characteristics, Nebraska had the highest number of "farming dependent" counties of any state [Bender et al.].

In light of the above, an interdisciplinary research framework is developed to investigate the economic, social, and psychological dimensions of one common theme -- a changing rural economic environment. The objectives are threefold. First, a conceptual model is prepared based upon factors encompassing the economic, social and psychological aspects of rural life. As part of this step, major characteristics that describe a rural community are defined. Second, the impacts of the "farm crisis" on these community characteristics are evaluated from available secondary data sources for Nebraska. Third, implications are drawn, a collective prognosis of the situation is made, and future research directions are suggested to more precisely assess the stress areas facing rural communities.

The Structure of a Rural Community: A Conceptual Model

Answers to the question, "What is a community?" reflect the viewpoint, the interest and the biases of the observer. Harmstron's definition of a community is:

> "A collection of micro units having common economic interest." [Harmstron, p. 4]

Recognizing there are also interrelated sociological functions, Buse and Bromeley define a community as:

> "A multidimensional web of interactions, both sociologic and economic, which give it the ability to provide the essential daily needs of its citizens." [Buse and Bromeley, p. 542]

Hillery analyzed 94 definitions of "community" and found that essentially the only common characteristic was that they dealt with people. He identified the three major elements of the definitions - a geographic area, social interaction and common tie or ties. These elements provided the basis for his definition:

> "...community consists of persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional common ties." [Hillery, p. 118]

Hillery's definition lays the groundwork for Poplin's description:

> "In brief, the term community refers to the places in which people maintain their homes, earn their livings, rear their children, and, in general, carry on most of the life activities." [Poplin, p.9]

In these definitions, the existence of micro units performing some economic function emerges, e.g., households, stores, farms, factories, government offices, etc. Each micro unit is involved with the production and consumption of both tangible and intangible goods and services which flow internally and externally, to and from the community as well.

A rural, agriculturally-dependent community is, to a great extent, a reflection of the type of agriculture practiced within its geographical area. The major economic activity will be the production, processing, and marketing of one or more major products. While this constitutes the export (basic) sector of the local economy, there are also support products and services (nonbasic) which are produced and consumed within the community by its residents. Such items range from the tangible (retailing, health care, financial services, etc.) to the intangible (comradery, security,

trustworthiness, mutual support, etc.). These represent "community commodities" and conceptually could be called Z_i's.

Analogous to the concept of household production, the goal of rural (and urban) residents is to maximize their welfare or utility. Further, each community attempts to maximize the welfare or utility of its residents through the production and consumption of community commodities (Z_i's).

Mathematically, equation (1) is a functional representation of the community's welfare function.

$$U = U(Z_1, Z_2, \ldots, Z_m) \qquad i = 1, 2, \ldots, m \tag{1}$$

where U = utility or welfare of a community

However, the rural community has limited resources in terms of market goods (e.g., food, clothing, gasoline, movie tickets, etc.), nonmarket goods (e.g., residents' time and skills, scenery, etc.), and income (farm and nonfarm). The availability of these resources and their costs are constraints for the rural community.

The community's production function for each Z_i can be described as follows:

$$Z_i = Z_i\ (X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_n; Y_1, Y_2, \ldots, Y_r, W) \tag{2}$$

where X_j = market inputs brought by the community,

$j = 1,2, \ldots, n$,

Y_k = nonmarket inputs that are provided by the community, such as residents' participation, homes as gathering locations, and other goods created by the residents, $k = 1,2, \ldots, r$,[2] and

W = total community wealth including revenue from farm and nonfarm sources and accumulated equity.

The community's objective function or goal is to maximize:

$$U = U(Z_1, Z_2, \ldots, Z_m) \qquad (3)$$

subject to the production and expenditure constraints

$$Z_i = Z_i(X_1, X_2, \ldots, X_n ; Y_1, Y_2, \ldots, Y_r ; W)$$

and

$$W = \Sigma p_j X_j + E$$

The variable p_j is the price of the j^{th} market input and E_3 represents accumulated equity.

Consumer demand suggests that as income or wealth decreases (increases) consumers reduce (increase) their demand for goods. Also, from production theory, a decrease (increase) in resources available to produce commodities implies that production of these commodities will decrease (increase). These forms of economic behavior suggest that decreases (increases) in community income or wealth will have a negative (positive) effect on the community's ability to produce and consume community commodities, Z_i. Therefore, it follows that community's capacity to improve residents' welfare will decrease (increase).

Evidence of Stress: The Nebraska Case

On the basis of the previously discussed community welfare concept, an attempt was made to identify various community commodities, Z_i's, which may be undergoing change due to the present farm crisis. While it is apparent that all communities are in a continuously dynamic state, it is believed that change in rural areas has accelerated during the present decade. The year, 1980, basically represents the peak of a profitable period of growth and

expansion for the agricultural sector. Due to the culmination of a series of economic events, the economic condition of that sector has generally deteriorated ever since. Thus, for purposes of this analysis, we attempt to focus on measures of change since 1980.

In addition to time-series measurements of change, it was also believed important to employ cross-sectional delineations to the various data sets. This is accomplished by (1) utilizing county level data and (2) grouping into four major county classes. The classes are as follows: metropolitan counties, regional trade counties, agriculturally dependent counties, and diversified (all other) counties.

The four metropolitan counties in Nebraska are all Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA's) as identified by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. The 10 regional trade counties are those which contained a city with a population of 10,000 or more (except the four metropolitan counties). Due to their size and geographic locations, these cities generally have large, overlapping trade and service areas.

The agriculturally dependent counties are those in which 30 percent or more of total wage and proprietor income has come from agriculture. On the basis of previous work by Bender et al. this agriculturally dependent classification includes 52 of Nebraska's 93 counties.

The remaining 27 counties form a residual class in which a somewhat greater degree of economic diversity is evident than there is among the agriculturally dependent counties. However, they were not thought large enough to be considered regional trade counties.

In the next subsections, evidence of stress is analyzed for the following areas: economic measures, demographic trends, and other sociological measures, and psychological indicators.

Economic Measures:

Several economic variables which bear on community welfare are analyzed to examine variations among the four classes of counties described above. Those included are income levels, retail sales activity, number of establishments, and real estate asset values.

Income levels generated in rural areas have traditionally lagged behind those of urban areas. But has the disparity increased in recent years? Using per capita federal adjusted gross income as the unit of measurement, a comparison is made among the various county groupings over the 1975-1984 period (Table 1).

In Nebraska, average per capita adjusted gross income for 1980 was $5,412 in agriculturally dependent counties, just over 80 percent of the State's average. Relative to the State's metropolitan counties, the agriculturally dependent county's average was 73 percent in 1980, up slightly from the 1975 level.

From 1980 to 1984, however, average income in the agriculturally dependent counties had increased only slightly in nominal terms while more sizable increases were occurring elsewhere. By 1984, their average income level was just 72 percent of the State average and less than 62 percent of the metro county average. Clearly, the income disparity has grown during the present decade. The State's metropolitan areas have basically followed national trends while income levels in other areas, particularly the agriculturally dependent counties, have not kept pace. Consequently, income constraints are limiting the availability of various "community commodities" Z_i's for these agriculturally dependent counties.[4]

Historically, rural communities have served the surrounding area as the primary trade centers; therefore, retail sales activity is a key economic

measure. To describe taxable sales, recent trends in Nebraska were tracked (Table 2). Average per capita taxable sales in the agriculturally dependent counties peaked in 1980 and have trended significantly downward ever since. Relative to the State average, these counties have fallen from nearly 68 percent in 1980 to 51 percent in 1985. Simultaneously, per capita sales in the metropolitan counties increased from 108 percent of the State average in 1980 to nearly 125 percent by 1985. Regional trade counties, scattered across the State, have aggressively competed with smaller communities for retail activity. However, they have also lost some of their market share to the metropolitan areas.

Taxable sales activity is influenced by a complex set of interrelationships including changing consumer shopping patterns, transportation costs, and numerous other factors in addition to income levels of residents. Therefore, to attribute recent changes in retailing activity entirely to the farm crisis is to overstate the case. Nevertheless, the changing patterns noted between 1980 and 1985 appear to be a clear acceleration of longer running trends which carry profound implications for rural retailing activity.

Another corollary indicator of economic activity in a local economy is the number and relative significance of "main street" businesses. We are identifying "main street" businesses as those that supply goods and services to firms and households in the community's trade areas. While the concept is clear, the identification of those which should be included is more difficult. The data used were obtained from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Retail and Services for 1982. Retail categories include businesses that sell building materials, general merchandise, food stores, auto dealers, gas stations, apparel, home furnishings and other retailers. The service

establishments provide legal, health, recreation, amusement, auto repair, lodging and other services.

Table 3 describes the number of establishments, sales receipts and employment of these "main street" businesses for 1982 in the four county classes. The metropolitan counties accounted for over 40 percent of the establishments and more than half of the State's receipts and employment reported by Nebraska's "main street" businesses in 1982. The regional trade counties captured nearly one fourth of those activities with the remainder shared almost equally between agriculturally dependent counties and all other counties.

As illustrated in Table 4, the rate of increase in "main street" business from 1977 to 1982 was slower for agriculturally dependent counties than the State as a whole.[5] It is interesting to note that the all other counties category, which includes smaller trade centers, was also unable to keep pace with the rest of the State. Indeed, the measures considered here suggest that similarities in the performance of businesses located in agriculturally dependent counties and all other counties outweigh their differences.

In 1982, the retail portion of these "main street" business accounted for more than 56% of the total number of establishments, over 75% of the total receipts and over 61% of their employment. Table 5 describes the 1977-1982 adjustments in retail business for the 4 groups of counties. All three indicators, establishments, sales receipts, and employment confirm that agriculturally dependent counties witnessed a slower growth rate in "main street" retail business.

A comparison of Table 5 and 6 supports the participation of Nebraska counties in the nationally observed shift toward services. Each measure

describes an increase in service activity that is large relative to the indicated adjustment in retail activity.

Most measures used to describe adjustments in the service sector follow the pattern of consolidation toward the larger trade centers observed elsewhere. However, a notable exception is apparent for measures of the change in employment. While other measures appear to favor larger trade centers, here the opposite pattern is indicated with the agriculturally dependent counties experiencing a large percentage increase. The demands for service of an aging rural population, the dispersion of services from urban to rural areas, increased costs incurred in servicing the needs of more sparsely settled, dispersed communities and variations in entry barriers are offered as possible explanations.

The results shown in Tables 1-6 suggest that the economic "crisis" in the farm sector has been accompanied by substantial economic stress in rural communities. Agriculturally dependent communities, in general, have lower per capita income, and in recent times experienced lower growth rates in business activity. The erosion of rural communities' economic base has several important implications. They include an acceleration in the rate of population out-migration, the diminished capacity to provide "community commoditites" for those who remain, and changes in the composition of rural population likely to produce further long term impacts on community structure.

Demographic Trends and Measures of Sociological Stress:

This section first analyzes demographic trends and then discusses changes in the availability of certain community commodities, (Z_i's) such as public education and health care. The objective here is to translate how the economic repercussions of the "farm crisis" may have affected Nebraska's

demographic trends which in turn influence the availability of community services. We contend that these effects on various community commodities (Z_i's) are likely to produce stress for residents of agriculturally dependent communities. Our examination of a community's Z_i's is not exhaustive; rather, we select commodities that are instrumental in a community's sociological network.

Table 7 illustrates the growth in Nebraska's population from 1970 to 1984. While the State as a whole experienced a population growth of 8.1% over this time period, the population of agriculturally dependent counties fell by 0.9%. Population increases ranging from 1% to nearly 14% are reported for the other 3 county classes. However, growth ranges exceeding 11% associated with regional and metropolitan counties distinguishes them from the other two county classes where relatively little change was reported.

According to the 1980 Census of Population data, the agriculturally dependent counties also have a higher proportion of the elderly, i.e., 65 years of age and older. The composition of the elderly population within the 4 county categories are: metropolitan counties -- 9.5%, regional trade counties -- 13.4%, agriculturally dependent counties -- 18.2%, all other counties -- 16.7% and all counties -- 13.1%.

These demographic data imply that not only are agriculturally dependent counties declining in population, but also that the elderly comprise a larger proportion of their population. As a result, many of these counties are experiencing a natural population decrease (deaths exceeding births) which, when added to out-migration, accelerates the population decline.

One implication of these trends is a potential reallocation of resources in these agriculturally dependent counties. The production of community commodities, Z_i's (e.g., services), would be expected to become more

consistent with the older population. Such shifts can be expected to have impacts on the decisions of younger residents.

Primary and secondary public education is an important service provided by communities. In terms of the previous theoretical community structure, public education services can be viewed as a Z_1. Table 8 shows Nebraska's public primary and secondary enrollment figures for the school years 1978/1979 and 1983/1984. Although student enrollment or attendance figures have declined for the State, the relative decline is larger in the agriculturally dependent counties. This result is consistent with the declining population trend for these counties (see Table 7).

Another important community commodity is health care. According to annual reports from the Nebraska Department of Health, Division of Health Data and Statistical Research, (see Table 9), the ratio of physicians per 100,000 population increased from 118 to 159 for the State between 1972 and 1983, the result of a 35 percent increase in the number of active physicians. For the agriculturally dependent counties, this ratio increased from 45 in 1972 to 49 in 1983 (an increase of 8.5 percent).

It was also found that agriculturally dependent counties employed a larger percentage of active physicians who were in the age categories: over 65 years and between 51-65 years of age (Table 10). This is consistent with a study conducted in Missouri (Hicks) which also found that non-metropolitan counties had the highest percentage of physicians over 65 years of age.

An important health resource is hospital staff -- nurses, practical nurses, hospital based physicians and other personnel. From 1976 to 1982, Nebraska experienced some composition shifts in hospital staffing with the major changes being an increase in registered nurses and a decrease in administrators and full-time physicians. The Nebraska Department of Health

data show agriculturally dependent counties as having the highest percentage of hospital staff devoted to administration and a lower ratio of registered nurses than other counties in the State.

During this time period, another change which took place was the increased reliance on part-time physicians, RNs, LPNs, and administrators by Nebraska hospitals. Data (annual reports of the Nebraska Department of Health) indicate that agriculturally dependent counties had a substantially larger percentage of part-time hospital staff than the rest of the State.

From available secondary data, it seems that agriculturally dependent counties have not shared in the State's increase of health resources. This reallocation of locally-based health services is likely to increase the stress of rural residents.

The level of participation in public welfare programs is affected by many factors including program availability and accessability and cultural attitudes in addition to levels of economic need. As a consequence, participation rates per 1,000 population have historically tended to be higher in metropolitan areas than in rural areas. Analysis of two such programs in Nebraska, Food Stamps and Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), confirms this general pattern (Table 11). However, the gap has significantly narrowed in recent years, with dramatic rate increases occurring between 1980 and 1985 in the nonmetropolitan counties. While the rate of participation in Food Stamp programs was increasing about 20 percent in the metropolitan counties, the rate more than doubled in agriculturally dependent counties. Similarly, ADC participation rates showed substantial increases in out-state Nebraska while rates per 1,000 population in the metropolitan counties were increasing only slightly. Part of the increase in nonmetropolitan areas may be due to a declining social stigma regarding public welfare programs. However, the

extreme increase in participation rates recorded here is more likely a reflection of greater economic stress.

Mental Health System Indicators of Rural Stress

A relationship between economic conditions and mental illness has been demonstrated by Brenner (1973). His findings suggested that occurrences of economic downturns are highly correlated with increases in the rate of mental illness in a given population.

The investigation of the relationship between economic variables and mental illness is focused on two mental health variables: (a) admissions to state psychiatric hospitals and community mental health centers, and (b) diagnoses of those who were admitted to these facilities. We attempted to determine if the public sector mental health system in Nebraska was noticeably affected by economic conditions in the period of time that constituted the rural "farm crisis". Interpretation of these data must be done with caution because they are aggregate data and do not indicate individual responsiveness to economic conditions.

Nebraska's mental health system includes three regional centers, formerly state psychiatric hospitals, and six regions, which provide community based mental health services. Analysis of the admissions to regional centers from the last six months of 1980 through the first six months of 1985 reveals a generally stable admissions rate. These data are illustrated in Table 12. None of the population clusters show a consistent positive or negative growth rate. Admissions to community mental health centers (Table 13), however, reveal small but relatively consistent positive growth rates in all four clusters until 1985 for agriculturally dependent counties, regional trade counties and diversified counties. These data should be treated cautiously because the 1985 data are only for the first six months of the year.

Diagnoses of those persons admitted to mental health facilities, in the five and one-half year period are more revealing, yet not conclusive. As indicated in Table 14, service providers in regional trade counties, agriculturally dependent counties and diversified counties reported from 44 to over 50 percent of the admissions as either alcohol or a minor mental problem (V codes).[6/]

Throughout the period of the crisis, community mental health programs have admitted a large number of persons experiencing either alcohol problems or those in the V code cluster. One interpretation of this finding is that persons suffering from these problems in the metropolitan counties have sufficient private resources and do not seek assistance from the public sector. It is not known whether this pattern of service delivery existed prior to the economic downturn that characterized the middle years of the 1980's since this data series only extends back to 1981.

In summary, available public sector mental health data do not indicate an impact of the "farm crisis." There are several explanations. First, the use of the public sector mental health system may not be the identified agency for treatment of the signs of stress. Initial signs of stress frequently are physiological in nature and the persons experiencing them may well report their needs to the health care system, including private physicians rather than the mental health system. A second explanation is that the facilities in question typically run at capacity. Fluctuations in admissions and diagnostic categories may not be obviously related to any external variable, like economic conditions. A third plausible explanation is that the sample period is not sufficient to allow meaningful changes in admissions or diagnoses to appear.

Conclusions and Implications

A rural community is not simply an economic unit of analysis. Rather it is an entity where an economic structure provides a foundation on which social institutions are built to form an environment for human interaction and development.

The current decade has been a stressful period for the farm sector and, in turn, for the agriculturally dependent rural community. In Nebraska, basic economic indicators of income levels, business activity, and asset values all point to economic deterioration relative to the performance of larger communities. While it is recognized that such economic patterns are not new phenomena, still the magnitude of change in a relatively short time period does imply an acceleration of long term trends. And to the extent, that community welfare is directly related to income or wealth conditions, one could logically conclude that more intense social and psychological stress exists as well.

However, secondary data sources used in this study to monitor social and psychological phenomena of stress do not reveal a great degree of change in recent periods. While economic changes can and do occur with considerable speed and magnitude, the manifestations of this changing environment work much more slowly through the social network and psychological conditions of individuals.

We also recognize the limitations posed by exclusive reliance on secondary data sources for monitoring change. First, there are aggregation problems where even data refined down to the county level may not capture individual community effects. Second, limited data availability precludes anything but the use of indirect proxies for measurement of stress.

Third, the infrequency and the time delay for data collection and processing prohibit timely analysis.

From our research to this point, we have described general changes in the structure of rural communities. Additional investigation is needed to identify and evaluate specifically the conditions for individuals, families and social groupings. We have gathered information for suppliers of community commodities that contribute to the development of human capital. However, for a more comprehensive assessment, public and private decision makers must also have primary data which reflects the views and behavior of community members.

From this brief initial attempt to focus on the changing rural community, it is our firm conviction, that structural change is proceeding rapidly in agriculturally dependent rural communities -- in essence, a phenomena associated with economic adjustment. Even though our measures of impact are somewhat inconclusive, the direction of change, from our interdisciplinary perspective, points to a need for further investigation of critical issues which carry important social implications.

Notes

[1] Savings and investments an be included as market goods.

[2] Note nonmarket goods are often created or produced from market goods. For purposes of this paper, it is not necessary to explicitly consider production functions for nonmarket goods.

[3] The cost of nonmarket goods is the opportunity cost of the resources used in production.

[4] It is obvious that one's level of economic well-being both actual and perceived, depends in large measure on accumulated wealth as well as income flow generated. Wealth can be liquidated for consumption purposes or maintained in income-producing forms to the economic advantage of its owner.

The farm crisis has had a very pronounced impact on wealth within that sector. In Nebraska, primary agricultural asset, land, has depreciated in value more than 50 percent since 1980. Other agricultural assets have also depreciated in value, leading to a situation in which roughly two-thirds of the agricultural sector's wealth (in constant dollars) has disappeared since 1980. In essence, the majority of accumulated wealth of the sector has eroded; and with it, consumption opportunity, retirement savings, reinvestment capital, and collateral for credit.

Data limitations preclude detailed analysis of wealth of county classifications. And while ownership patterns result in this impact affecting owners in all counties, still it is quite clear the magnitude of impact is greatest in the agriculturally dependent counties. Not only are a higher proportion of residents engaged in farming, but also a higher proportion maintain ownership in agricultural assets. therefore, the wealth lost impact is profound.

[5] This data source limits the time comparison to the period 1977-1982. This time period generally precedes the years of acute economic stress in agriculture. Therefore, it seems logical to assume that this measure of change may be only an early indicator of a continuing trend.

[6] V codes are in a category of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd. Ed. (1980), that are typically responsive to the immediate environment and, compared with a criterion of major mental disorder, are relatively minor. These disorders may be quite disruptive to peoples' lives and constitute serious problems, but are not considered to be symptomatic of major mental illness. Examples of V codes are malingering, adult antisocial behavior, academic problems, occupational problems, uncomplicated bereavement, noncompliance with medical treatment, phase of life problem, marital problem, and parent-child problem.

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Table 1. Characteristics of Federal Adjusted Gross Income By County Classes in Nebraska, Selected Years 1/

Item	Metropolitan Counties	Regional Trade Counties	Ag Dependent Counties	All Other Counties	All Counties
1975 Fed. Adj. Gross Income:					
Total	3,114,383,394	1,354,564,836	1,083,560,274	1,018,843,248	6,571,351,752
% of Total	47.4%	20.6%	16.5%	15.5%	100.0%
Per Capita	4,891	4,589	3,515	4,156	4,424
% of State Per Capita average	110.6%	103.7%	79.5%	93.9%	100.0%
1980 Fed. Adj. Gross Income:					
Total	5,109,338,346	2,237,858,605	1,657,688,787	1,550,962,323	10,555,848,060
% of Total	48.4%	21.2%	15.7%	14.7%	100.0%
Per Capita	7,369	6,946	5,412	6,237	6,723
% of State Per Capita average	109.6%	103.3%	80.5%	92.8%	100.0%
1983 Fed. Adj. Gross Income:					
Total	6,062,154,404	2,374,886,761	1,696,028,317	1,628,977,187	11,762,046,469
% of Total	51.5%	20.2%	14.4%	13.9%	100.0%
Per Capita	8,371	7,243	5,537	6,550	7,492
% of State Per Capita average	111.7%	96.7%	73.9%	87.4%	100.0%
1984 Fed. Adj. Gross Income:					
Total	6,496,426,011	2,462,531,639	1,689,308,496	1,648,557,990	12,296,824,736
% of Total	52.8%	20.0%	13.7%	13.5%	100.0%
Per Capita	8,971	7,510	5,532	6,634	7,657
% of State Per Capita average	117.2%	98.1%	72.2%	86.6%	100.0%

1/ Based upon federal adjusted gross income as reported to the Nebraska Department of Revenue. Per Capita incomes for 1975 determined using 1970 population totals; for 1980 using 1980 population totals; and 1983 & 1984 using 1984 population totals.

Table 2. Characteristics of Taxable Sales by County Classes in Nebraska, Selected Years 1/

Item	Metropolitan Counties	Regional Trade Counties	Ag Dependent Counties	All Other Counties	All Counties
1975 Taxable Sales:					
Total (dollars)	2,317,208,287	1,219,819,606	698,332,867	798,904,956	5,034,265,716
% of State's Total Sales	46.0%	24.2%	13.9%	15.9%	100.0%
Per Capita (dollars)	3,639	4,133	2,280	3,259	3,393
% of State Per Capita average	107.3%	121.8%	67.2%	96.1%	100.0%
1980 Taxable Sales:					
Total (dollars)	3,606,113,280	1,831,265,169	1,005,572,515	1,142,375,673	7,585,326,637
%of State's Total Sales	47.5%	24.1%	13.3%	15.1%	100.0%
Per Capita (dollars)	5,201	5,684	3,283	4,594	4,832
% of State Per Capita average	107.6%	117.6%	67.9%	95.1%	100.0%
1983 Taxable Sales:					
Total (dollars)	4,046,215,560	1,864,007,812	938,303,443	1,110,391,479	7,958,918,294
% of State's Total Sales	50.8%	23.4%	11.8%	14.0%	100.0%
Per Capita (dollars)	5,836	5,685	3,063	4,468	5,070
% of State Per Capita average	115.1%	112.1%	60.4%	88.1%	100.0%

Table 2. Characteristics of Taxable Sales by County Classes in Nebraska, Selected Years 1/ (continued)

Item	Metropolitan Counties	Regional Trade Counties	Ag Dependent Counties	All Other Counties	All Counties
1984 Taxable Sales:					
Total (dollars)	4,058,051,307	1,691,157,195	803,364,195	967,305,044	7,519,877,741
% of State's Total Sales	54.0%	22.5%	10.7%	12.8%	100.0%
Per Capita (dolalrs)	5,604	5,158	2,623	3,893	4,683
% of State Per Capita average	119.7%	110.1%	56.0%	83.1%	100.0%
1985 Taxable Sales:					
Total (dollars)	4,275,252,590	1,641,570,290	739,273,121	926,300,558	7,582,396,559
% of State's Total Sales	56.4%	21.6%	9.8%	12.2%	100.0%
Per Capita (dollars)	5,904	5,006	2,421	3,728	4,722
% of State Per Capita average	125.0%	106.0%	51.3%	79.0%	100.0%

1/ Based upon Taxable Sales as reported to the Nebraska Department of Revenue. Per Capita incomes for 1975 determined using 1970 population totals; for 1980 using 1980 population totals; and 1983 & 1984 using 1984 population totals.

Table 3. The "Mail Street" Business Structure in 1982 1/

County Categories	Establishments Number	%	Receipts Dollars	%	Employment Number	%
Metropolitan Counties	8,190	41.7 2/	$4,930,332	54.8	97,301	56.7
Regional Trade Counties	4,583	23.4	1,971,960	21.9	37,900	22.1
Ag Dependent Counties	3,418	17.4	922,333	10.2	16,034	9.3
All Other Counties	3,430	17.5	1,169,122	13.0	20,146	11.7
All Counties	19,625	100%	9,003,962	99.9 3/	171,746	99.8

1/ Data Source: Census of Retail and Services 1982. U.S. Department of Commerce

2/ Percentage of State Total.

3/ Data for the four county categories may not sum to 100% because certain counties were deleted from calculations when data were not reported for either 1977 or 1982 due to disclosure concerns.

Table 4. Main Street Business Adjustments, 1977-1982 1/

County Categories	Percentage Changes In: Number of Establishments (%)	Receipts (%)	Employment (%)
Metropolitan Counties	+30.5	+65.9	+22.3
Regional Trade Counties	+17.3	+46.7	+17.6
Ag Dependent Counties	+ 6.1	+39.3	+17.6
All Other Counties	+ 8.1	+38.8	+13.9
All Counties	+18.4	+54.6	+19.9

1/ Figures computed from data in: Census of Retail and Services, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table 5. "Main Street" Retail Business Adjustments, 1977-1982 1/

County Categories	Percentage Changes In: Number of Establishments (%)	Receipts (%)	Employment (%)
Metropolitan Counties	8.5	41.0	3.6
Regional Trade Counties	0.2	35.0	2.5
Ag Dependent Counties	-5.6	28.0	-1.5
All Other Counties	-4.8	30.9	-0.3
All Counties	0.6	36.5	2.3

1/ Figures computed from data in: Census of Retail and Services, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table 6. "Main Street" Service Business Adjustments, 1977-1982 1/

County Categories	Percentage Changes In: Number of Establishments (%)	Receipts (%)	Employment (%)
Metropolitan Counties	62.2	168.9	58.4
Regional Trade Counties	52.2	145.6	67.7
Ag Dependent Counties	42.1	137.3	119.8
All Other Counties	42.9	120.9	78.2
All Counties	54.0	158.9	65.2

1/ Figures computed from data found in: Census of Retail and Services, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Table 7. Nebraska Population Trends 1/

County Categories	Years			Percentage Change		
	1970	1980	1984	1970-1980	1980-1984 (%)	1970-1984
Metropolitan Counties	636,764 (42.9%)2/	692,510 (44.1%)	724,158 (45.1%)	8.8	4.6	13.7
Regional Trade Counties	295,137 (19.9%)	322,175 (20.5%)	327,891 (20.4%)	9.2	1.8	11.1
Agriculturally Dependent Counties	308,282 (20.8%)	306,311 (19.5%)	305,378 (19.0%)	-0.6	-0.3	-0.9
All Other Counties	245,138 (16.5%)	248,640 (15.8%)	248,494 (15.5%)	1.4	-0.1	1.4
All Counties	1,485,321	1,569,636	1,605,921	5.7	2.3	8.1

1/ Data source: Census of Population, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

2/ Figures in parentheses represent percentage of county category population to the State's population for each year. Due to rounding errors, summation of county categories may not equal 100%.

Table 8. Nebraska Public Schools Average Daily Members (ADM) 1/

County Categories	School Years 1978/1979	1983/1984	Percentage Change 1978/1979 to 1983/1984
Metropolitan Counties	124,968	113,020	-9.56
Regional Trade Counties	59,902	55,197	-7.85
Agriculturally Dependent Counties	58,541	51,331	-12.32
All Other Counties	44,754	44,389	-10.78
All Counties	293,210	263,939	-9.98

1/ Data Source: Financial Report of Public School Districts, Nebraska Department of Education (1978/1979 and 1983/1984 School Years).

Table 9: Active Physicians Per 100,000 Population 1/

County Categories	1972	1979	1983
Metropolitan Counties	182.9	235.5	254.8
Regional Trade Counties	95.8	112.1	125.3
Ag Dependent Counties	45.8	44.0	49.7
All Other Counties	65.1	60.4	63.0
All Counties	118.1	144.8	159.2

1/ Data Source: Nebraska Department of Health, Division of Health Data and Statistical Research.

Table 10. Active Physicians Per 100,000 Population By Specific Age Categories [1/]

County Categories	1974	1979	1983
Metropolitan Counties			
51-65 years of age (%)	24.5	22.7	22.8
65 + years of age (%)	6.6	4.4	5.5
Average age (years)	46.8	43.1	45.6
Regional Trade Counties			
51-65 years of age (%)	32.9	30.7	25.9
65 + years of age (%)	14.1	10.1	8.8
Average age (years)	51.6	48.7	47.4
Ag Dependent Counties			
51-65 years of age (%)	32.6	36.3	32.2
65 + years of age (%)	14.7	12.6	13.8
Average age (years)	50.7	50.2	49.1
All Other Counties			
51-65 years of age (%)	27.3	26.0	24.2
65 + years of age (%)	15.6	10.0	11.5
Average age (years)	47.4	46.7	47.4
All Counties			
51-65 years of age (%)	26.5	25.0	23.9
65 + years of age (%)	9.2	6.2	6.9
Average age (years)	49.6	48.3	48.1

1/ Data Source: Nebraska Department of Health, Division of Health Data and Statistical Research

Table 11. Participation Rates Per 1,000 Population in Food Stamp and ADC Programs 1/

County Categories	Participation Per 1,000 Population					
	Food Stamps			Aid to Dependent Children (ADC)		
	1980	1985	% change 1980-1985	1980	1985	% change 1980-1985
Metropolitan Counties	55.3	66.3	19.9	33.7	36.3	7.7
Regional Trade Counties	28.9	61.3	112.1	15.4	27.0	75.3
Ag Dependent Counties	23.2	43.2	86.2	11.4	15.7	37.7
All Other Counties	25.4	44.7	75.6	11.8	15.9	34.7
All Counties	39.0	57.6	47.8	22.1	27.3	23.5

1/ Data Source: Nebraska Department of Social Services.

Table 12. Nebraska Regional Center Admissions [1]

County Categories	1980 [2]	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985 [3]
Metropolitan Counties	393	893	760	832	731	333
Regional Trade Counties	486	888	745	760	686	388
Ag Dependent Counties	201	476	402	396	426	231
All Other Counties	184	325	305	320	308	164

1/ Date Source: Unpublished data from the Nebraska Department of Public Institutions.

2/ Last six months only.

3/ First six months only.

Table 13. Nebraska Community Mental Health Center Admissions [1]

County Categories	1981 [1]	1982	1983	1984	1985 [2]
Metropolitan Counties	1542	3156	3555	3593	1843
Regional Trade Counties	2544	5222	5665	5689	2724
Ag Dependent Counties	1141	2417	2488	2540	1225
All Other Counties	1423	2942	3077	2946	1470

[1] Data Source: Unpublished data from the Nebraska Department of Public Institutions.

[2] Six months only.

Table 14. Nebraska Community Mental Health Center: Percentage of Total Cases Alcohol and V-Code.

County Categories	1981 1/	1982	1983	1984	1985 2/
Metropolitan Counties	9.53	9.7	11.22	15.36	13.24
Regional Trade Counties	45.4	48.64	49.6	49.92	43.25
Ag Dependent Counties	45.35	44.48	50.48	48.9	45.31
All Other Counties	34.5	37.02	44.85	48.37	41.9

1/ Data Source: Unpublished data from the Nebraska Department of Public Institutions. V-Code refers to minor mental problems.

2/ Six months only.